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A Caution Born Of Experience

President Kennedy is carefully weighing possible United States actions to bring about the downfall of Cuba's Fidel Castro. The extreme care with which potential moves are being considered no doubt results of the disaster stemming from the abortive rebel invasion, which had American backing. The Administration's ineptness in the handling of this affair continues to be shown in the apparent absence of advance planning on a line of action to be taken should the invasion attempt fizzle.

Elsewhere on this page, Columnist Ray Tucker says that the President has made up his mind on the conditions under which he would consider it necessary for the U.S. to intervene militarily and unilaterally in Cuba. Beyond that, it seems evident that no firm decision has been reached on what steps this country can and should take.

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In the light of what has happened recently, it appears that the next most likely move for this country will be to cut off all Cuban-American trade. It is strange, no doubt, to many Americans that, although diplomatic relations have been severed with Cuba, trade continues and a sizable volume. Another possibility being seriously studied is a blockade of Cuba to prevent further shipments of communist arms.

Since direct military intervention in Cuba by the U.S. obviously

is to be a last resort in any event, it seems to us that by all means this country should concentrate its attention immediately on Cuban exiles to improve their potential for political leadership and their military capacity. The yoke of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency on the rebel leaders should be removed and more responsible and better trained advisers made available. Let the Cuban rebels themselves control the propaganda, training and military strategy for their return. If the next invasion succeeds, the rebel chieftains must be in a position to assume political as well as military control.

The April fiasco on the Cuban beaches was only one of the opening phases of the struggle to topple Castro. What many of us forget is that not many months before Castro overthrew Batista it looked like his rebellion was dead when a general strike he called against the government failed and 300 of his men were slain. However, it developed that the failure merely sharpened the will of the resistance. There doesn't seem to be much doubt but that the same thing will happen again as far as the current rebels are concerned.

Despite all this, there is really no ready-made remedy for the Castro situation on which President Kennedy can call. Whatever his next step is to be, we can be certain that it will be taken with a caution born of experience.